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MILWAUKEE AND WAUKESHA COUNTY JOIN FORCES TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF PERTUSSIS

Update on Regional Response Activities

As confirmed numbers of Pertussis cases in the southeast region continue to escalate, the Milwaukee Waukesha County Consortium for Emergency Public Health Preparedness recently took action to establish a Unified Incident Command System (ICS) to more effectively manage the Pertussis (whooping cough) epidemic regionally. The Consortium is comprised of 15 local public health agencies that will collaboratively continue to conduct surveillance, case and contact follow-up guidelines, suspect case evaluation and school and parent awareness communications.

“This is not a geographically isolated disease, every local health department across the state has experienced a sharp increase in Pertussis cases compared to previous years,” said Health Commissioner Bevan K. Baker, CHE.

Pertussis is a bacterial infection of the respiratory tract that is transmitted through airborne droplets by face-to-face or close contact with an infected individual. In infants and children, the disease begins much like a common cold and progresses to prolonged and severe coughing, often followed by vomiting and exhaustion. Following the cough, individuals may make a loud whooping sound as they struggle to inhale air. In adults, the symptoms are much milder and varied, but persistent (more than one week duration) cough is still common. Antibiotic treatment can prevent or limit the severity of illness and the period of contagiousness to others.

“I commend the Consortium’s member agencies for their willingness to partner during such a critical time. Their combined efforts have enabled us to cooperatively manage Pertussis, which benefits all of the residents in the region,” said Waukesha County Public Health Manager and Unified Incident Command Chairperson Nancy Healy Haney.

	2004 Probable & Confirmed Cases	2003 Reported Cases
Milwaukee County	359	29
Waukesha County	208	14
Total	567	43